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COUNSELOR JAMES HIGGISTON

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SUBJECT: EMBASSY ASHGABAT HOLDS AVIAN FLU TOWN HALL
MEETING

¶1. On January 25, 2006 the Embassy organized a town hall meeting for resident American citizens in Turkmenistan to discuss concerns regarding avian flu. Approximately 40 Americans (including Embassy and Peace Corps staff) attended the event.

¶2. Ambassador informed the audience that although there were no reports of avian flu reported in Turkmenistan, the Embassy was closely monitoring the situation and is in direct contact with the GOTX on avian flu issues. Adding to the Ambassador's comments, Post's Nurse Practitioner reviewed preventative procedures on how to protect from contracting avian flu, and what to expect if avian flu develops in Turkmenistan.

¶3. RSO and Conoff also briefed the audience on general security and consular precautions, reminding American citizens to remain aware of their surroundings and to keep their registration information current with the Consular Section.

¶4. Comment: This was Post's first town hall meeting held for the resident Amcit community in Turkmenistan in recent memory. Although the impetus for holding the town hall meeting was to address concerns regarding avian flu issues, security awareness and the need to register are always important issue to remind Amcits about, especially in Turkmenistan. End Comment.

JACOBSON